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Advocate on EC's panel quits citing conflict of values

Mohit D Ram, a lawyer who has been representing the Election Commission before the Supreme Court, has resigned from the panel of advocates of the EC, saying his values were not in consonance with the present functioning of the poll body. Advocate Mohit D Ram was a panel counsel for the EC in the Supreme Court since 2013.

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Shri B S Yediyurappa
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We pick every call within 15 Secs*.
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Report illegal activities like unauthorised hospital bed booking, black marketing / hoarding of Oxygen, Remdesivir and other medicines etc.
*average call response time
KARNATAKA INFORMATION

14-day 'lockdown' from Monday

Movement of pvt vehicles strictly prohibited; Chief Secretary says curbs more stringent now

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

STARTING 6 am on Monday, a near-complete lockdown will be enforced across Karnataka. With 592 Covid-19 deaths reported on Friday, the highest so far, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa acknowledged that the 'Corona Curfew', that is in force, had been ineffective and hence, there was a need to implement more stringent restrictions. A 14-day lockdown has been announced from May 10 till 6 AM on May 24 in the state.

Vehicular movement will be strictly prohibited in a bid to stop people from getting on to the roads. While goods vehicles and home delivery service providers are exempted, the use of personal vehicles will be prohibited even to buy essentials or takeaways.

"The second wave of Covid-19 is wreaking havoc across the state. The 'Corona Curfew' hasn't yielded expected results in reducing the spread of infection and death rate. Therefore, the government has decided to impose a complete lockdown to check the spread of the disease and deaths," said Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa before announcing the 14-day lockdown. Soon after the CM's press conference, Chief Secretary P Ravi Kumar clarified that it wasn't a "lockdown", but "additional stringent measures".

He added that the prohibition of vehicular movement and industries were the biggest changes in the new guidelines.

"Vehicle movement was allowed so far, but starting Monday it won't be. One has to walk even to buy essentials from neighbourhood shops or food from hotels. No vehicles will be allowed, but hotels can use vehicles for home delivery. No vehicular movement will be allowed except in case of emergencies or to catch scheduled flights and trains. Industries were earlier allowed to function, but now only those that have in-situ staff will be allowed. E-commerce will be allowed," Ravi Kumar said, adding that there won't be any vehicle pass system.

CONTINUED ON: P4

A family of migrant labourers wait for a special train to return to their hometown at the Mysuru railway station on Friday, ahead of the lockdown which will be enforced from May 10 | UDAYSHANKAR S

NATIONWIDE	MAY 6	MAY 7
Fresh cases	4,12,262	4,14,188
Recoveries	3,29,113	3,31,507
Deaths	3,980	3,915

STATEWIDE	MAY 6	MAY 7
Fresh cases	49,058	48,781
Recoveries	18,943	28,623
Positivity Rate	29.83%	30.69%

592
Deaths in a single day

With several residents testing positive, Rameshwara village in Davanagere district may be declared a containment zone

State Govt caps price of CT-scan and digital X-ray in private hospitals and labs at ₹1,500 and ₹250, respectively

TOUGHER RESTRICTIONS TO KICK IN

WHAT'S NOT ALLOWED
Personal vehicles prohibited on roads, except for medical emergencies, vaccination, hospital visits with proof
All industries prohibited, except units manufacturing essentials; production units that require continuous process; industries operating with in-situ staff
Inter-state/inter-district travel prohibited, except in emergencies
Buses and Metro prohibited

WHAT WILL BE ALLOWED
Takeaway from restaurants, groceries allowed by walk; no vehicles will be allowed
Hotels, eateries for takeaways & deliveries only (till 9 pm)
Shops selling groceries, meat, milk, vegetables and fruits (6 am-10 am)

Pharmacies, fuel stations, banks and ATMs will be open
Goods vehicles
Standalone liquor outlets & shops (6 am to 10 am)
Pushcarts selling vegetables and fruits (6 am-6 pm)
Milk booths and HOPCOMS outlets (6 am-6 pm)

Home delivery of food, e-commerce, essentials
Construction allowed only in-situ
Flights and trains uninterrupted - cabs to and from airport and railway stations allowed with ticket as proof

Movement of media personnel with valid ID cards issued by their organisation/ institution to the place of work and back permitted

CENTRE TO GIVE 1.2K TONS

SC throws out plea against K'taka HC order on O_2 quota

KANU SARDA @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday refused to stay a Karnataka High Court order, directing the Centre to raise the state's daily oxygen allocation to 1,200 metric tons. The order came on a day the Karnataka government opted for a fortnight lockdown from May 10 to 24 amid a crippling shortage of oxygen and a massive spike in fresh cases and deaths. The state recorded 49,781 cases and 592 fatalities over the past 24 hours.

"We do not want to leave the citizens of Karnataka in the lurch. The HC order is a careful, calibrated and judicial exercise of power. We see no reason to entertain the Special Leave Petition," said a bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud.

Earlier, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench that HCs should refrain from passing orders on immediate supply of oxygen. "We are trying our best to solve the problem. If every high court starts to pass orders, then it will lead to a complete breakdown of the pandemic management," Mehta said. While assuring to set up a panel to revisit oxygen allocation, the bench questioned the Centre's rationale behind allocating oxygen from far-flung places after the Karnataka government pointed out that it could not pick up 30 MT earmarked for it from a distant port.

CoWIN CONCERN

Techies to the rescue as 18+ struggle to find slots for jab

BISMAH MALIK @ Bengaluru

TECHNOLOGY works in most cases, but when it comes to registering for vaccinating millions of people who are aged under 45 on the CoWIN portal, it is proving to be a nightmare.

On Friday, the government announced the introduction of an additional 4-digit security code to minimise data entry error. Nearly 5,44,33,405 registrations in the 18-45 age group were made through the portal on that day .Venting out their frustration on social media forums, the younger folks aren't necessarily amused by a new feature on CoWIN when even a slot booking is now almost impossible, especially in populous metros.

Software engineers and coders are also coming to the rescue of the people wanting to get vaccinated, but are not able to find a slot. "There is a huge disparity when it comes to finding slots in various parts of the country," explains, Shyam Sunder, who has developed getjabs.in . With the help of the API of CoWIN, apisetu.gov.in, Sunder said that his portal sends email alerts to subscribers whenever a slot is available in a particular district. The next step of quickly logging in to CoWIN, filling their KYC details and registering rests upon the user.

Sunder said these alerts are also delivered to users in various Telegram groups by other techies/portals to enable quick registration.

P7

PANDEMIC PROFITEERING ADDS TO PATIENT STRESS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

It is not just that the totally inept national healthcare management has made the second wave of Covid-19 more lethal than it ought to have been. It's that pandemic profiteering by vultures in the system has amplified patient distress and even led to loss of lives.

From oximeters to oxygen to ambulances to hospital beds and life-saving medicines, the prices of all of them have jumped manifold. Even in states that imposed a price cap on those services, there is hardly any regulatory system to curb fleecing. Amid a surge in Covid cases, the demand for hand sanitisers, masks, pulse oximeters and thermal scanners has gone up. With no cap in the pricing or mechanism to ensure quality, the market is flooded with low-quality products. For example, a pulse oximeter which used to cost around ₹300 a few months ago now costs upwards of ₹3,000 in many states.

In Tamil Nadu, an oximeter was priced at ₹700 in March. But one has to shell out ₹3,000 to buy it now. The inflation in price is almost the same across the country — from around ₹900 before the pandemic to up to ₹3,500 now.

According to sources, medical shops get branded oximeters priced between ₹900 and ₹5,000, for which MRP is charged. However, products from some Chinese companies will not have MRP on them. "This is where overpricing occurs. Though the cost is only ₹700-1,200, medical shops charge up to three times that amount," said a source.

The demand, as well as price, of infrared thermal scanners has also shot up. "During the first wave, the price of infrared thermal scanners had gone up and later the demand declined. Till recently, the price was around ₹500. But now the price has gone up to ₹1500-2,000 again," said All Kerala Chemist and Druggist Association's Ernakulam district president P V Tomy.

It is the same story for essential drugs. A pharmacist working in a private hospital in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu said Covid patients are fleeced by private hospitals and pharmacies in several ways. "Ulinastatin, Methylprednisolone Sodium Succinate, and Enoxaparin Sodium injections are currently sold three times their MRP. A respiratory exerciser worth ₹250 is sold for ₹900 in the pharmacies attached to hospitals. A high concentration oxygen mask worth ₹300 is sold for ₹1,100," he added.

An official with the Tenkasi government hospital said private hospitals were paying ₹10,000-13,000 bribe to health workers for referring Covid patients to them. "The amount spent on bribing does not matter to these hospitals as they collect ₹1.5-6 lakh from each Covid patient," he added.

P10

THE BRIGHTER SIDE: P18

CHANDIGARH — Ambulance to Delhi with oxygen & ventilator: Normal cost ₹15,000, Now ₹35,000

HYDERABAD — Five-litre imported oxygen concentrator: Normal cost ₹40K-60K, Now ₹95K-1.2L

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Placement Highlights
- Number of companies visited - 110
- Highest Salary Offered - 31 Lakh
- Companies offering more than 10 LPA - 21

Highlighted Recruiters
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